

Bicycle Patrol

425.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for the Talbot County Sheriff's Office to safely and effectively use bicycle patrol for the purpose of enhancing field patrol efforts in the community.

425.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Talbot County Sheriff's Office that patrol bicycles may be used for regular patrol duty, traffic enforcement, parking control or special events. The use of the patrol bicycle will emphasize deputy mobility and office visibility in the community.

425.3 OPERATIONS

Bicycle patrol has been shown to be an effective way to increase deputy visibility in congested areas, and the quiet operation of the patrol bicycle can facilitate a tactical approach to crimes in progress. Patrol bicycles may be deployed to any area, at any hour of the day or night, according to office needs and as staffing levels allow.

Requests for specific deployment of bicycle patrol deputies shall be coordinated through the bicycle patrol coordinator or the Shift Sergeant.

425.4 SELECTION

Interested deputies who have completed the probationary period shall submit a change of assignment request to their appropriate Commanders. A copy will be forwarded to the bicycle patrol coordinator. Qualified applicants will then be invited to an oral interview. The oral interview will be conducted by the coordinator and a second person to be selected by the coordinator.

Interested deputies shall be evaluated by the following criteria:

- (a) Recognized competence and ability as evidenced by performance
- (b) Special skills or training as it pertains to the assignment
- (c) Good physical condition
- (d) Willingness to perform duties using the bicycle as a mode of transportation

425.4.1 DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITIES

Deputies should operate the bicycle in compliance with Maryland traffic laws under normal operation, unless their duties require otherwise (Md. Code TR § 21-1202).

Deputies may operate the bicycle without lighting equipment during hours of darkness only when it reasonably appears necessary for officer safety or tactical considerations. Deputies must use caution and care when operating bicycles without lighting equipment or when they are operating in violation of the rules of the road.

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Deputies are exempt from the rules of the road, while using audible and visual signals, under the following conditions (Md. Code TR § 21-106):

- (a) In response to an emergency call
- (b) In the immediate pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law
- (c) In response to a fire alarm, but not while returning

425.5 BICYCLE PATROL COORDINATOR

The bicycle patrol coordinator shall be appointed by and directly responsible to the Operations Commander or the authorized designee.

The coordinator may appoint a senior bicycle patrol deputy or other designee to assist in the coordination of bicycle patrol deputies and their activities.

The responsibilities of the coordinator include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Organizing bicycle patrol training.
- (b) Inspecting and maintaining an inventory of patrol bicycles and program equipment.
- (c) Inspecting and documenting, no less than every three months, that bicycles which are not in active service are in serviceable condition.
- (d) Scheduling maintenance and repairs.
- (e) Evaluating the performance of bicycle patrol deputies.
- (f) Coordinating activities with the Operations Division.
- (g) Other activities as required to maintain the efficient operation of bicycle patrol.

425.6 PATROL BICYCLE

Bicycle patrol deputies will be assigned a specially marked and equipped patrol bicycle, attached gear bag, two batteries and a charger.

Patrol bicycles shall be primarily black or white in color with a "Sheriff's" decal affixed to each side of the crossbar or the bicycle's gear bag. Every patrol bicycle shall be equipped with:

- (a) Front and rear reflectors.
- (b) A siren and horn.
- (c) A steady or flashing blue and red warning light that is visible from the front, sides or rear of the bicycle.
- (d) A rear rack and/or gear bag sufficient to carry all necessary equipment to handle routine patrol calls, including report writing, vehicle storage and citations.
- (e) A gear bag that shall include a first-aid kit, tire pump, repair tool, tire tube, security lock, high-visibility vest and equipment information and use manuals. These items are to remain with/on the patrol bicycle at all times.

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Patrol bicycles shall be properly secured when not in the deputy's immediate presence.

425.6.1 TRANSPORTING THE PATROL BICYCLE

The patrol bicycle should be transported using a vehicle bicycle rack. Due to possible component damage, transportation of the patrol bicycle in a trunk or on a law enforcement vehicle push-bumper is discouraged.

425.6.2 MAINTENANCE

- (a) Bicycle patrol deputies shall conduct an inspection of the patrol bicycle and equipment prior to use to ensure proper working order of the equipment.
- (b) Deputies are responsible for the routine care and maintenance of their assigned equipment (e.g., tire pressure, chain lubrication, overall cleaning).
 - 1. Each patrol bicycle will have scheduled maintenance twice yearly to be performed by a repair shop or technician approved by the Office.
- (c) Deputies shall not modify the patrol bicycle or remove, modify or add components to the patrol bicycle except with the express approval of the bicycle patrol coordinator, or in the event of an emergency.
- (d) If a needed repair is beyond the ability of the bicycle patrol deputy, a repair work order will be completed and forwarded to the coordinator for repair by a technician approved by the Office.
- (e) Patrol bicycle batteries shall be rotated on the assigned charger at the end of each tour of duty.
 - 1. During prolonged periods of non-use, each bicycle patrol deputy assigned a patrol bicycle shall periodically rotate the batteries on the respective chargers to increase battery life.
- (f) At the end of a patrol bicycle assignment, the bicycle shall be returned clean and ready for the next tour of duty.

425.7 UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

Deputies shall wear uniforms and safety equipment in accordance with the Uniforms and Civilian Attire Policy.

The uniform consists of the standard short-sleeve uniform shirt or other office-approved shirt, with Talbot County Sheriff's Office badge and patches, and office-approved bicycle patrol pants or shorts. Optional attire may include, but is not limited to, a jacket in colder weather and turtleneck shirts or sweaters when worn under the uniform shirt.

Bicycle patrol deputies shall carry the same equipment on their duty belts as they would on regular patrol assignments. Assignment-specific safety equipment should include, but is not limited to,

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office-approved helmet, a radio headset and microphone, riding gloves, protective eyewear and approved footwear.

Deputies will be responsible for obtaining the necessary forms, citation books and other office equipment needed while on bicycle patrol.

425.8 TRAINING

Deputies must complete an initial office-approved bicycle-training course prior to assignment to bicycle patrol. Thereafter, bicycle patrol deputies should receive twice yearly in-service training to improve skills and refresh safety, health and operational procedures. The initial training shall minimally include the following:

- (a) Bicycle patrol strategies
- (b) Bicycle safety and accident prevention
- (c) Operational tactics and techniques using bicycles

Bicycle patrol deputies will be required to train and qualify with their duty and secondary firearms while wearing bicycle safety equipment, including the helmet and riding gloves.